

REMARKS

The specification has been reviewed, and clerical errors of the specification have been amended.

In the Action, claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP '232, and claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '232. Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 were allowed, and claim 8 was objected to.

In this respect, clerical errors in claims 1, 2 and 4-8 have been amended. Claim 3 has been amended to clarify the structure.

In JP '232, reinforcing elements 8 are attached by welding to slits 5 of a steel pipe 2. The slits 5 are formed at first to the pipe 2. The reinforcing element 8 is inserted into the pipe 2 from an end thereof, and is placed at the position of the slit 5 by a rod. Then, the reinforcing element 8 is attached to the pipe provisionally by screws 7, and thereafter, the projections 8c are welded with the pipe 2 through the slit.

In claim 3 of the invention, the guiding elements are prepared separately and provided in underneath joint holes piercingly formed on the outer peripheral portion of said steel pipe member. The lower end edge portion of the reinforcing elements enters the guiding elements. The detailed structure of the guiding element is defined in claim 3. JP '232 does not have any guiding elements formed separately and provided in the joint hole, as defined in claim 3 of the invention. Therefore, claim 3 now amended is not anticipated by JP '232.

In claim 7 of the invention, the engaging element to be suspended by the suspending means is formed on the upper portion of the reinforcing element. In JP '232, the engaging element is not formed on the reinforcing element. Thus, the engaging element is not suspended by suspending means in JP '232.

In claim 7, the reinforcing element is inserted from the outer peripheral surface of the steel pipe member toward the interior of

the steel pipe member. In JP '232, the reinforcing element 8 is inserted inside the pipe 2 from an end thereof, and is placed at the position of the slit 5 by a rod. The reinforcing element in JP '232 is not inserted from the outer peripheral surface of the pipe as recited in claim 7.


Therefore, the method as specified in claim 7 is not obvious from JP '232.

As explained above, claims 3 and 7 are patentable over JP '232.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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